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## Introduction

When I wrote the introduction to last week's bulletin, I think that I was mentally preparing for Armageddon to be unleashed this week. Happily, it hasn't arrived, at least not in Bath and NE Somerset or North Somerset. Or not yet. We have had some staff absence as a result of COVID, with a couple of schools more significantly affected, and we have had some pupil cases including a number of outbreaks. But so far, the continuities with December are more noticeable than the differences. At least we are ready again and I was as impressed as ever to see the flexibility and creativity that our Remote Learning Leaders displayed in their planning. We watch and wait.

I have got some news about appointments to share. I am delighted to confirm that we have appointed a new Deputy Director of Education to lead our work on Inclusion, SEND and Disadvantage. Debbie Coker, currently Headteacher at Fishponds CE Academy in Bristol will be joining us in Term 5 (subject to confirmation). Debbie is an experienced former SENDCO and she has led Fishponds through a time of rapid change and improvement. She was extremely impressive on interview and brings great expertise and an inspirational personal commitment to the flourishing of all young people in education. She will make a very positive difference to us in our Trust.

We also have several Headteacher posts to fill. Tom Inman has decided that he is ready (after more than 13 years at Gordano) for a fresh challenge, and I am obliged to him for giving us the maximum time to advertise his post. He has done a superb job at Gordano and we will miss him enormously. The advert is now live. At St Peter's we are also getting ready to advertise the Headship and anticipate that we will be making an appointment in March.

I'm looking forward to seeing Heads at the online meeting tomorrow.

Gary

## Updated Policies

A signed copy of the Trust's Finance Policy, which came into effect from 21<sup>st</sup> December, is now available on our website [here](#). This is an important Trust policy for school leaders, finance staff and Governors to be aware of to support our Trust in maintaining and developing robust systems of financial control.

## Policy Consultation

We have launched two policies for consultation last week, as detailed below:

- Support Staff Appraisal Policy
- Teaching Staff and Headteacher Appraisal Policy

We would like to encourage Headteachers and School Business Managers to participate in this consultation. The Policies can be viewed [here](#). We would also like Chairs of Local Governing Bodies to ensure that the consultation is reported to their LGB and any response from the LGB is noted in their minutes. Chairs may wish to identify a member(s) of the LGB to lead on making a response to share the workload and benefit governor skills.

If you would like to submit changes, suggestions or amendments to any of the policies please highlight your changes or make them using tracked changes. Please submit your comments to the consultation to Tania Newman via email: [HR@lsp.org.uk](mailto:HR@lsp.org.uk)

## Consultation - Scheme of Delegation

The last review of the Trust's Scheme of Delegation was undertaken in February 2021 for the 2021-22 academic year. Consultation for the Scheme of Delegation for the 2022-23 academic year was due to commence on 19<sup>th</sup> January. Following discussions with the executive team and the Board the timescales for this consultation have been amended as detailed below:

### Amended Consultation Timescales

- Proposals for Consultation to Board - 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022
- Consultation with Schools - 25<sup>th</sup> April to 13<sup>th</sup> May 2022
- Subject to outcome of consultation, we propose to seek approval for the revised scheme from Board on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022

The annual planner and policy review schedule has been updated to reflect this change and can be downloaded [here](#).

## Updated application forms

The suite of application forms have been updated, as detailed below:

- Support Staff Application Form
- Teaching Staff Application Form
- Headteacher Application Form

Improvements include check boxes when you click on boxes within the forms and also sections relating to the onboarding of staff have been removed. The questions should also flow better for the candidate experience.

The new forms should replace existing forms on recruitment websites and held within your schools. The forms can be found on Folder ([LSP Policies\HR Policies, Forms, Templates & Letters\Recruitment\Trust application forms\Updated Application Forms](#))

The central HR team are reviewing onboarding documents for new employees, and you will be updated of these new documents soon.



## Carbon Reduction Plan Update

As you know, works to help us to develop our carbon reduction action plans in the months ahead are taking place, with the current phase being undertaken by Powerful Allies.

As part of this, there will be thermography surveys undertaken at each school in the Trust which we are planning to take place during February half term. This is an external building survey that is done within the school grounds using infra-red technology to establish where heat leakages are present within buildings. It should take no longer than about 30 minutes and, as the Hub Estates Leads will be present during the survey, it should not have any adverse impact on the operation of schools.

Powerful Allies will be producing an outline report for each school, ahead of the thermography, which we understand you will receive by 4<sup>th</sup> February.

We would like some initial feedback from schools on this outline report by 18<sup>th</sup> February. As this does not allow a great deal of time, we wanted you to know asap so that you can arrange a meeting to review the outline plan and enable you to achieve this deadline. We suggest attendees for this meeting should include the Head, Business Manager, other member/s of SLT and a Governor as appropriate. If you could arrange for someone to take notes at the meeting, we would be happy to receive your feedback in this format.

The outline report requires no specialist knowledge to understand and we are looking for your initial thoughts on its content and achieving carbon neutral. This could include things like:

- Any inaccuracies that you identify in the report or missing information/opportunities
- Any thoughts on support that you need from the Central Team to achieve carbon neutral - both in terms of guidance or facilitation and funding
- Your thoughts on the timescales and steps that you want to take within your school(s) to raise awareness of this issue with your LGB, staff and pupils in order to support the physical and cultural changes required, and again, any support that you would like with this process.

All of the steps above are required to meet the first phase of this project which is to satisfy the requirements of the £55k grant that we have been awarded to support the production of these plans. This is, however, an issue that will take many years to resolve. The second phase of this work will be a further opportunity for staff, pupils and Governors to provide their feedback on their reports before they are formally adopted by each school/federation and we can start to plan the delivery of the necessary actions. More information on phase two will be provided in due course and it will be influenced by the feedback that you provide to your outline reports.

## Belmont Estate - opportunities for schools

We have had a very positive offer from the Belmont estate (close to Long Ashton, Flax Bourton and Wraxall) to have free use of their facilities and work with their education team to develop pupil visits. This might be of interest to either primary or secondary schools. Their outdoor education lead is Nicola Gliddon [nicola.gliddon@belmont.estate](mailto:nicola.gliddon@belmont.estate) and she would be delighted to hear from schools to discuss how we can work together.

You will find their information packs [here](#).

## Risk Assessments & Control Measures

The Central Team have met with the Employee Liaison Committee and they are happy with the arrangements that we have put in place in relation to our risk assessments and control measures. We also shared with them the staffing contingencies scenarios that have been produced for both [primary](#) and [secondary](#) schools. These are designed to help you in considering the next steps to take when facing staff shortages and thank you to all of you that have contributed to their production. We recognise, however, that the diversity of our schools means that different action will be required/available in different schools. We hope that this guidance is of use but please feel free to contact Gary, Sharon or Louise if you feel you are getting close to having to close some provision so that we can support you.

We are aware that most schools are now using, or are about to start using CO2 monitors. We would be grateful if you could let us know if you have any rooms with sustained high readings, and if you are planning to apply for the DfE's air purification units, so that we can help you with any remedial actions required.

## Educational Setting Status form - amended

The DfE has amended the list of sub-codes in the [Educational Setting Status form](#) to say that code Y can be used for non-attendance due to exceptional staff absences or unavailability of transport due to COVID-19.

## Confirmatory PCRs - updated guidance and risk assessment template

Following the recent announcement that confirmatory PCRs would not be needed in most circumstances from 11 January, the DfE has updated its range of [guidance](#) to reflect this. The guidance has also been updated to clarify the position regarding individuals being able to leave isolation from day 7 (if meeting the required criteria).

We are aware of some instances where test and trace have given incorrect advice to families on self isolation. Please contact us if you need any support with these issues.

We have updated our [template risk assessment](#) to reflect this change. The amendments are in green with old text crossed out. Please update your risk assessment with these changes. We do not feel that it is necessary to formally consult staff on these changes as they reflect changes in government policy, however, please inform them of the change and update the version on your website.

## Attendance guidance for schools - updated

The DfE has updated [Attendance Guidance](#) in line with the UKHSA announcement about confirmatory PCR tests. The [Addendum](#), recording attendance in relation to Covid-19 during the 2021 to 2022 academic year has also been amended.

## Face coverings and exams

The DfE has been asked by the Confederation of School Trusts to clarify the position on face coverings in public and mock exams. This is the response that they have received:

‘Following the temporary reintroduction of face coverings in classrooms, the [public health guidance to support exams](#) was updated on Sunday 2 January. This guidance sets out that we would not ordinarily expect candidates and invigilators to wear face coverings during exams and assessments, but only on arrival and departure. Both candidates and invigilators may wear face coverings if they wish to do so.

We recommend centres also follow this guidance for mock exams and other assessments taking place under exam conditions or as close to exam conditions as possible, including those taking place to gather evidence for Teacher Assessed Grades under the [guidance published by Ofqual](#) on Thursday 11 November. This includes circumstances where these assessments take place in classrooms.

For vocational and technical qualifications where the exam or assessment may require more interaction with an invigilator or others, such as a practical demonstration, centres have the flexibility to recommend that face coverings be worn if they deem this appropriate.

The infection prevention measures detailed in the public health guidance to support exams help to ensure a safe environment for students and staff. These measures continue to apply and should be adhered to.’

## Year End Closure PS Financials

We have now completed the year end journals and are in a position to close the previous academic year on PSF.

In order to carry out this task we will need to exercise a period of downtime on PSF and all users should be logged out using the correct method. (If you are unsure - please ask).

During this time the data will be copied and a full backup taken. The work is scheduled for 5pm Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2022. Could we please ask that PS Financials is not used from 4.45pm on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2022. The system will be available to use from 8 am the following day.

There is a risk that any work carried out after 5pm on Wednesday may be lost and not recovered, please set a calendar note and notify other PS Financial users within your school.

If you have any concerns or require further information, please contact Natalie Fear [nfear@lsp.org.uk](mailto:nfear@lsp.org.uk)

Thank you.

## Commit Year End Process

Now that we have closed the 2020-21 financial year, we need to roll forward the 2021-22 financial year into the 'Current Year' on Orovia so that we can use 'Next Year' for 2022-23 budget planning. In order to do this, schools need to 'Commit Year End Process'. However, prior to committing the year end, you may like to do some housekeeping to ensure you do not lose anything you wish to keep. Instructions are available on Foldr [here](#).

Please ensure that you carry out this process by Friday, 28th January. Once this is done, please advise us via [lspfinance@lsp.org.uk](mailto:lspfinance@lsp.org.uk)

Only when all schools have undertaken this process, can we ask Orovia Support to commit this at the central side and request that they upload 2022-23 GAG statements once they start to arrive.

## Additional funding to support the cost of the Health and Social Care Levy

Following last week's item outlining details of the new Schools Supplementary Funding, the Finance Team have now estimated funding allocations for schools for the period April to August 2022. The allocations and workings are available in Foldr [here](#). You should include this estimate of additional funding under nominal 1055 for your December budget monitor, and should also ensure that you are using an employee scenario updated for the revised National Insurance rates applied. (Please note that these are estimates only and the actual allocations will be published later in the Spring).

The Core Services charge will increase due to this additional funding and a revised estimate of Core Services charges taking the estimate of Supplementary Funding into account have been updated in Foldr [here](#) for your information.

## Governance Update

### FOR THOSE WHO HOLD A GOVERNANCE OFFICE, SLT, SUBJECT OR DEPARTMENT LEADS

#### SOURCE: NGA:

- Multi Academy Trusts: New NGA guidance to support MATs with Summary Evaluations
- Gender Pay Gap: Public Sector gap remains high at 15.5% v 9% in Private Sector. Of the 50 public/ private sector organisations with the widest gaps, 18 were MATs.

#### SOURCE: DfE:

- Encouraging schools to seek help to invite qualified ex-teachers to consider returning to teaching on a temporary basis to help Covid challenge. Toolkit available to encourage ex-teachers to temporarily return to teaching [toolkit](#).
- Accelerator Fund: Endowment Education Foundation given £10m to support availability and scale-up of well evidenced programmes, to help disadvantaged pupils catch up. 3 Regional Schools Commissioner regions prioritised: North of England; East Midlands and Humber; West Midlands.

#### SOURCE: OTHER:

- Diocesan Board of Education, Bath and Wells: Spring Term Training Programme circulated. Bookings via [Diocese of Bath & Wells Education department Events | Eventbrite](#)
- Church Schools: SIAMS suspended until end of January due to the additional workload at schools in dealing with Covid.

John Purcell